

If the Ombudsman thinks that the prison has been unfair or has acted wrongly, he can ask the Superintendent or the Commissioner for Correctional Services to correct the matter.

You will always be told of the result and the reasons for the Ombudsman's decision in regard to your complaint.

SOMETIMES THE OMBUDSMAN CANNOT ASSIST

The law states what the Ombudsman can do. There are some things that he is not able to do.

For example, the Ombudsman cannot provide legal advice, or deal with complaints about court decisions. He cannot investigate complaints about politicians, private persons or businesses.

If your problem is outside of the Ombudsman's area of responsibility, then he will advise you of this fact and who you might contact to address your complaint.

CAN YOU BE VICTIMISED IF YOU MAKE A COMPLAINT

You cannot be punished for making a complaint, unless you have deliberately misled or lied to the Ombudsman. If you believe that you have been victimised for making a complaint, tell the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman takes such allegations very seriously.

OTHER AGENCIES

As indicated, you may complain to the Ombudsman about the actions of any other NT Government Agency or Authority, Local Government Council or the Northern Territory Police.

You should write to the Ombudsman and explain what your problem is and what you have done to try and fix it. The Ombudsman will consider your problem and he will try to assist you with it.

DARWIN:

**12th Floor, NT House
22 Mitchell Street**

**GPO Box 1344
DARWIN NT 0801**

**Telephone: 8999 1818
Facsimile: 8999 1828**

Toll Free: 1800 806 380

E-Mail: nt.ombudsman@nt.gov.au

ALICE SPRINGS:

**1st Floor, Belvedere House
Cnr Bath & Parsons Streets**

**GPO Box 2388
ALICE SPRINGS NT 0871**

**Telephone: 8951 5815
Facsimile: 8951 5828**

Toll Free: 1800 806 380

E-Mail: nt.ombudsman@nt.gov.au

*DO YOU HAVE
A COMPLAINT
WITH NT
CORRECTIONAL
SERVICES ?*

CAN WE ASSIST?



COMPLAINTS BY PERSONS IN CUSTODY

WHAT DOES THE OMBUDSMAN DO?

The Ombudsman may receive and examine complaints about Northern Territory Government Agencies and Authorities (including NT Correctional Services), Local Government Councils and the Northern Territory Police.

In regard to NT Correctional Services, if you think you have been unfairly treated by the agency, any correctional centre, prison medical service, juvenile justice service or community corrections, you can make a complaint to the Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman provides a free service.

The Ombudsman investigates conduct that may be

- ↑ Illegal
- ↑ Unreasonable, unjust or oppressive
- ↑ Improperly discriminatory
- ↑ Based on improper motives or irrelevant grounds
- ↑ Based upon a mistake of law or fact
- ↑ Wrong.

The Ombudsman is not on anyone's side. He is an independent, neutral investigator.

If a complaint is justified, he will recommend action to be taken to fix the problem. This may solve the complaint or it may focus on fixing practices and procedures for the future.

The Ombudsman can only make recommendations, which are usually accepted by an agency. If

recommendations are not accepted, the Ombudsman can report to Parliament.

WHAT TO DO IF I HAVE A COMPLAINT

Talk to the Superintendent first.

You should first try to resolve your concerns with the prison or authority involved. If necessary, ask to speak to the Superintendent. You can also write to the Commissioner of Correctional Services or the Head of any agency involved.

You may consider speaking to the Official Visitor to try and obtain assistance in resolving any problems that you might have. Only those more serious complaints, or those that cannot be resolved by the agency or prison concerned, should be referred to the Ombudsman.

HOW TO CONTACT THE OMBUDSMAN

You can write to the Ombudsman at the address set out on the back of this brochure.



Prison officers are not allowed to read letters that a prisoner sends to the Ombudsman or to the Commissioner of Correctional Services.

Prison officers must also provide prisoners with facilities to be able to write to the Ombudsman and those letters must be sent, sealed, without being opened or censored, directly to the Ombudsman. You will not be required to pay the postage.

Similarly, letters from the Ombudsman to a prisoner cannot be opened or read by prison officers.

If you are not able to put your complaint in writing, you can ask that an officer of the Ombudsman be requested to visit you to discuss your concerns. This can be conveyed either through the Official Visitor, a prison officer, your legal representative or any other representative.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU COMPLAIN

In most cases, the Ombudsman will try to resolve matters as quickly as possible. He may make inquiries with the prison or relevant agency and examine the files about your matter. If, however, a complaint is not satisfactorily explained, or resolved, after preliminary inquiries, a formal investigation may then take place.